Commitment to Community:
Field Placements

Many courses in the education department are community-based and incorporate observation and participation in area public schools. Bowdoin is fortunate to have strong relationships with many schools throughout Maine—this allows Bowdoin students to actively engage in field placements in rural, suburban, and urban school settings throughout their education coursework. At the introductory level, students observe in local public schools for a day. In intermediate level coursework, students may serve as learning partners to middle school students while examining learning behaviors in the school community. In advanced courses, students take on progressive responsibility for the planning and implementation of lessons in a secondary classroom. This may culminate with a fourteen-week teaching practicum as part of the Bowdoin Teacher Scholars program. At all levels, the education department believes that field work both challenges and illuminates material being discussed in classes.

At each level of the curriculum—from introductory classes to seminars in curriculum and teaching—students are exposed to the three tenets that guide Bowdoin’s education department:

• **Be aware of the big picture:** The study of education sheds light on one of the United States’ fundamental public institutions and on the humanistic dimensions of teaching and learning that are vital to constructing a meaningful life. Responsible teaching depends upon a solid background in the social foundations of education.

• **Embrace theory and practice:** Effective teaching builds on a strong foundation of content knowledge and thoughtful application of curricular and pedagogical theory to practice. Teachers gain expertise by listening, observing, doing, and reflecting.

• **Model and live in the spirit of inquiry:** Excellent teachers position themselves as learners of their students and their communities, and they adjust their curricula, pedagogies, and use of technology to meet the needs of individuals. Teachers cannot assume that others will learn as they did and do, and cannot teach simply as they were taught. Teaching is an intellectually challenging practice that requires ongoing learning, self-assessment, collaboration, and research.

Courses in the program are therefore appropriate for students with a general interest in education, as well as those who wish to prepare for a teaching career in secondary schools or for graduate work in education.

The department offers two minor programs, an interdisciplinary major in mathematics and education, and the Bowdoin Teacher Scholars program for secondary teacher certification.

The Teaching Minor

The education department approaches teaching and teacher education as intellectual, moral, and political endeavors. The department’s goal is to prepare teachers who have a lifelong engagement with learning, who teach all students effectively and with dignity, and who will be indispensable colleagues and future leaders in schools.

Students pursuing a teaching minor begin a gradual and sequential preparation for professional practice in introductory courses where they engage in participant teaching. Responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating lessons continues throughout intermediate and advanced courses, increasing in frequency and length as students gain more professional knowledge and experience. Students must also meet certain content area requirements to be eligible for advanced-level teaching minor coursework.

The Education Studies Minor

The education studies minor is appropriate for students who have a general interest in the study of education. Like those in other disciplines, education studies courses at Bowdoin are an integral part of the liberal arts. They introduce students to the tradition of education—to its history and philosophy, to its interrelationships with other cultural institutions, to how it both mirrors and changes the society that creates it.

Education studies courses focus on an institution that is a major force in shaping people’s lives. The courses comprising the education studies minor address a variety of questions that are of interest to students from other disciplines: school administration and finance are important themes in government and economics; race, class, and gender issues

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in schooling are also issues of sociology and anthropology; perceptions of childhood and adolescence form the base of many studies in psychology.

Interdisciplinary Major in Mathematics and Education

This major provides students with an opportunity to engage broadly in the field of mathematics while also completing requirements for the teaching minor. It is a path designed for students considering teaching secondary-level mathematics following graduation. Students who complete this interdisciplinary major are eligible to apply for the Bowdoin Teacher Scholars program.

Bowdoin Teacher Scholars Program

Students who complete the courses comprising the teaching minor, as well as specific content area course requirements, may choose to apply to the education department’s state-approved, public school teacher certification program. Bowdoin Teacher Scholars complete a full-time, fourteen-week student teaching practicum and participate in a professional development seminar.

Bowdoin Teacher Scholars follow one of two pathways. In the first, students participate in the program as undergraduates during the spring semester of their junior or senior year. In the second, they participate in the program during a spring semester within two years following their Bowdoin graduation. Successful completers of the program are eligible for initial Maine public school teacher certification in one of the following content areas: secondary (grades 7-12) English, mathematics, social studies, life science, physical science, and K-12 world language.

Education

Island Schools Project

The Island Schools Project was established in 2008 as a service-learning component of the education department’s advanced seminars on Teaching and Learning and Curriculum Development. Through these courses, students explore the opportunities and challenges of teaching in small island communities. Bowdoin students travel to communities such as Vinalhaven, North Haven, and Deer Isle/Stonington to meet with school faculty, observe classes, and learn first-hand about the communities’ educational resources and economic challenges. Following this overnight visit, high school students from these schools come to campus, where Bowdoin students host them for an overnight visit comprised of structured exposure to college life. High school students participate in an education class, tour campus, stay in a dorm, eat in the dining hall, and get a better sense of life on a college campus.

After Bowdoin

Through the education department, students are prepared to become active participants in all sectors of education. Following graduation, education studies minors are employed in a wide range of fields, from nonprofit organizations to higher education administration. Teaching minors frequently pursue work in youth development and academic enrichment programs, as well as independent schools. Bowdoin Teacher Scholars currently teach in public secondary schools throughout the United States and in international schools. Many students continue with graduate study in their major discipline or in fields such as education policy, school finance, and school leadership and administration.

Faculty and Staff

Charles Dorn, associate professor of education, B.A. (George Washington), M.A. (Stanford), Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), is an educational historian who investigates the civic functions adopted by and ascribed to centers of early childhood education, public elementary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities. He is currently at work on a comprehensive history of American higher education. Prior to obtaining a Ph.D., Dorn taught high school for nine years, an experience on which he continues to draw when teaching courses that contribute to the education department’s Bowdoin Teacher Scholars program.

Alison Riley Miller, instructor in education, B.A. (Ithaca), M.A. (Arcadia), Ph.D. candidate (Columbia), conducts research that focuses on student learning and engagement with science practices in the context of STEM education. She is particularly interested in students’ engagement with practices around model use in the context of Earth science and in pedagogical strategies and educational contexts that support such engagement. Prior to pursuing her Ph.D., Miller taught for nine years at the secondary level, an experience that informs her research interests in Earth science teaching and learning, design-based research, cognitive apprenticeship, and situated learning.

Doris A. Santoro, associate professor of education, B.A. (Rochester), Ed.D. (Columbia), conducts research in philosophy and education that is blended with feminist theories to inquire into conceptions of teacher education, metaphors of teaching, and the ethical and sociopolitical work of teachers. Her background in urban public schools and alternative-to-incarceration programs also contributes to research questions concerning the intersections of race, ethnicity, language, and gender through the lens of social justice. She has served as a literacy consultant and developed the bilingual education framework for an urban school district.

Sarah Wheeler Chingos, program placement and outreach coordinator, B.A. (American), M.Ed. (Harvard), coordinates field placements for students enrolled in education courses, and oversees outreach initiatives with area schools and communities. She provides logistical support for the Bowdoin Teacher Scholars program and informally assists education students with internship and job searches. Her professional background in admissions, career counseling, and teacher placement positions her to help students navigate the transition from student to professional.